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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the beliefs about language learning held by secondary school students of French, German, Latin, and Spanish at five levels of instruction. Subjects were 447 students aged 11-18 years. Survey questions concerned language learning strategies and patterns, personal motivation for language learning, language aptitude, and the nature of language learning. Results are reported separately for each language group and in the aggregate, and are reported for major areas of agreement and major areas of disagreement, as well as areas in which language groups' responses differed somewhat. Overall, results indicate that students' beliefs about language learning do change somewhat over the course of their language learning experience, and that some differences exist between language groups. Implications for instruction are discussed briefly. The questionnaire is appended. Contains 19 references. (MSE)

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SECONDARY STUDENTS' BELIEFS ABOUT LANGUAGE LEARNING

ED 427 514

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The instruction of French, German, Latin, and Spanish at the secondary level is and has been a common practice in the United States since World War I. Although U.S. educators may have the same instructional goals in mind when they recommend a given language curricula, their students may not. Moreover, the beliefs that contribute to these goals may be very different even among students. Consequently, secondary students' beliefs about language learning may influence the efficiency and effectiveness of their acquisition over time.

The purpose of this paper is to identify and analyze student beliefs about "foreign" language (FL) learning at different times during the span of a program. More specifically, the study juxtaposed beliefs held by secondary students of French, German, Latin, and Spanish, known in the United States as commonly taught languages (CTLs), at the first, second, third, fourth, and fifth year of instruction. By comparing different samples, the author seeks to expose possible influences of maturity and year in program on the beliefs held by students. The instrument for this research was expanded from the Horwitz (1988) *Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory* (BALLI) and is identified as the *Kuntz-Rifkin Instrument* (KRI). (Appendix A - Survey) The analyses seek to identify the most common beliefs of students and the significant differences of beliefs among different lengths of instruction. The article describes belief theory and previous research of student beliefs about language learning, outlines the

methods and procedures for the study, and ends with a discussion of the results.

Beliefs and Language Acquisition

"Beliefs" are defined in this study as notions about language learning (the personalization of public knowledge) that adolescents have acquired before receiving instruction and may have changed while continuing their instruction. These preconceived beliefs may limit language acquisition and proficiency and thus may precondition student success or lack of success.

Such beliefs highlight knowledge that students have about their own abilities to learn a "foreign," "another," or "second" language and the procedures necessary to acquire fluency in a new language. Some adolescents may hold beliefs as a result of their previous primary school instruction of this or other languages or of contact with speakers of the language. Other adolescents may be totally novice learners but hold beliefs upon the basis of societal influence. A few adolescents may speak the targeted language as a result of their heritage, but they may not know the educated standard form or may not be literate in the language. Because of these secondary students' backgrounds, their beliefs may incite attitudes about the language or its culture.

Previously, language researchers (Campbell et al.; Fox; Horwitz; Kuntz; Oxford; Tumposky; Wenden) identified beliefs about language learning held by adults of a CTL. To further

examine the belief theory, Kern (1995) surveyed university students of French at the beginning of their first semester and at the end of their second semester. He found that some students' beliefs and attitudes were not easily modified through teacher intervention. While other responses showed a high correlation at the end of the first year with those of the instructors.

Research concerning adolescent students is limited. One study (Mantle-Bromley) reported the responses of 7th grade students prior to a 9-week FLES/FLEX program. This study confirmed Minert's (1991) findings that adolescents' responses indicated misinformation about language learning. Another study examined responses of St. Lucian 7th graders enrolled in both French and Spanish (Kuntz 1997). These latter students had several misconceptions about language learning despite the fact that they had learned English prior to studying French and Spanish.

The results of these studies suggest that such assumed beliefs may be erroneous or even detrimental to learning (Horwitz 1988). Therefore, identifying student beliefs may enable teachers and authors of textbooks to devise learning strategies that support or correct beliefs and improve student proficiency. Ironically, although students are the targeted purchasers of the courses and textbooks, they are probably the least understood component in the design of language programs and courses (Heilenman).

The present study expands the data collected for first-year students of the CTLs to secondary students at multiple levels of instruction. This research addressed the following questions:

1. What are the most strongly rated statements about language learning for first year, second year, third year, fourth year, and fifth year students of French, German, Latin, and Spanish?
2. What are the significantly different statement responses among students of first, second, third, fourth, or fifth year in French or Spanish?

Method

This study was designed to identify beliefs utilizing survey research. In addition to demographic statements, the KRI survey contained 47 statements designed in a Likert 5-scale, closed-ended format. This scale measures the strength of student agreement with each statement. For purposes of data analysis, a student choice is equated to numbers as follows:

(a) strongly agree	=	1
(b) agree	=	2
(c) neutral (neither agree nor disagree)	=	3
(d) disagree	=	4
(e) strongly disagree	=	5

During September 1997 and 1998, the author administered the survey to students in middle and high school language programs. Sampling consisted of secondary students enrolled in first through fifth year of French (199), German (32), Latin (19), or Spanish (197). The total sample size was 447 students. Because of the nature of the school enrollments, female (238) responses were greater than those of males (209). All students were aged between 11 and 18.

By state law, all secondary schools must offer at least one language beginning in the 7th grade level. By 2015, the governor anticipates that 200 districts will provide immersion schools (Sandrock). In the district of the sample, the current offerings comprise American Sign Language, Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Latin, and Spanish. The district offers advanced-placement French and Spanish courses and joint third and fourth-year courses for German and Latin classes. French and

Spanish instruction begins at the middle schools. In the past, Russian and Swahili were offered. Presently, language courses are elective. However, since most Wisconsin institutions have a entrance requirement of two years of a language, students who anticipate higher education enroll in one language for at least two years. Some students take five years of a language in anticipation of college waiver or advanced placement status.

Statistical analyses comprised both descriptive and inferential ones. The descriptive analyses (frequencies and percentages) matched the procedures done by Horwitz and colleagues for students of French and/or Spanish (Horwitz 1988; Kern; Kuntz; Mantle-Bromley; Tumposky). In addition, this study analyzed data for significantly different responses of students by year of instruction. Although the sample size was large enough to utilize the robust parametric measures (analysis of variance), the survey's Likert scale format also enabled the use of parametric measures. All data were analyzed for significance at an alpha level of (α) = 0.05.

Results

The results produced some variations of responses between the students of first through fifth year of instruction.

1. WHAT ARE THE MOST STRONGLY RATED STATEMENTS ABOUT LANGUAGE LEARNING FOR FIRST, SECOND, THIRD, FOURTH, AND FIFTH YEAR STUDENTS WHO ARE STUDYING FRENCH, GERMAN, LATIN, AND SPANISH?

To answer this question, the author selected responses that were greater than 50 percent (majority) for agreement (strongly agree and agree) or disagreement (disagree and strongly disagree).

Responses from Students of French

Students of French at all levels responded with majority agreement for five statements and majority disagreement for two statements (Table 1).

Agreement. Of the agreement statements, results in the fifth year showed a greater percentage for three statements than that was reported for the first year. These states are (1) "It is easier for children than adults to learn a FL, (3) "Some languages are easier to learn than others," and (42) "I need to fulfill a FL requirement for graduation." Unlike responses to other statements, the responses to (1) showed a continuous increase in agreement over time. Responses for one statement (34) "Everyone can learn to speak a FL" showed a decline in the percent of agreement. While responses for another statement (17) "It is important to repeat and practice" showed a variability over the five-years of instruction.

Several statements not receiving a majority response in the first year did so in following years. These statements include (46) "I plan to travel to a country where this language is spoken," (13) "It's OK to guess, if you don't know a word in the FL," (11) "It is better to learn a FL in the country," (10) "It is easier for someone who already speaks a FL to learn another one," and (31) "I would like to learn this language so that I can get to now its speaker better." The increase in agreement for these statements may show student sensitivity to the language-learning process.

Disagreement. In contrast, the majority of student for all five years of French reported disagreement for two statements. These statements (9) "You shouldn't say anything in the FL until you can say it correctly," and (38) "I have distant ancestors who spoke this language" also received a higher percent of disagreement in the fifth year. Likewise, responses to eight statements showed an increase in disagreement in the fifth year (35) "In order to read something in a FL, you have to know all the words," (36) "In order to listen to something in a FL, you have to know all the words, (43) "I need to qualify for a fellowship," (45) "I am taking this FL because the quality of instruction of this FL is excellent," (30) "Americans think that it is important to speak a FL," (39), "This FL will be helpful to me professionally," (12) "I would go up to a speaker so that I could practice speaking," and (28) "It is easier to read and write this FL than to speak and understand it." The change in

responses to statements (9), (12), (35), and (36) suggest modifications in linguistic beliefs about strategies to gain language proficiency. Similarly, responses to statement (30) and (39) may indicate a growing awareness to the limited importance of "foreign" languages for employment in U.S. businesses and government agencies.

No statement responses declined in disagreement over time. However, responses for statement (24) showed great variability Student from second and fifth years agreed while students from third and fourth years disagreed. This fluctuation may reflect district's changes in curricular and skill goals for different years. Responses to this statement (24) and those of (28) may indicate a concern and awareness of the difficulty of different language skills.

Table 1 Response Percentages > 50% for Students of French in 1997/8

Language Sample size	Yr 1 n=63	Yr 2 n=41	Yr 3 n=47	Yr 4 n=27	Yr 5 n=18
		AGREEMENT			
3-Some FLs easier to learn than others	90%	80%	94%	89%	100%+
17-Important to repeat & practice	85%	84%	94%	96%	83%
34-Everyone can learn to speak FL	71%	70%	67%	77%	59% -
1-Child learn FL better than adults	70%	83%	89%	89%	100%+
42-FL is requirement for graduation	54%	71%	67%	58%	71% +
		***			
13-Guessing is OK		59%	60%	63%	83% +
46-Plan to travel to country where FL spoken		67%	69%	62%	77% +
31-Learn FL to know its speakers better					61% +
10-It is easier to learn L3 if learned FL			55%	74%	59%
11-Better to learn FL in country			76%	78%	56%
4-This FL is of medium difficulty		64%	60%		56%
40-Interested in FL culture of people			53%		56%
24-Easier to speak than understand		54%			53%
6-I will learn FL very well	55%	55%		56%	-
7-Speak with excellent accent	52%		60%	52%	-
23-Speaking well will bring opportunities	55%		54%		-
25-Learning FL differs from other subjects		68%	67%	52%	-
2-Some people born special ability FL		53%	68%	67%	-
19-Mistakes are hard to rid later		51%		56%	-
37-Easier to read/understand than speak/write			52%		-
14-It takes 3-5 years to learn this FL			54%		-

Language Sample size	Yr 1 n=63	Yr 2 n=41	Yr 3 n=47	Yr 4 n=27	Yr 5 n=18
		DISAGREEMENT			
9-Do not speak until correct	67%	55%	64%	82%	84% +
38-Distant ancestors who spoke this FL	52%	59%	62%	58%	82% +
		***			
35-To read in FL, must know all words		64%	78%	65%	88% +
36-To listen in FL, must know all words		52%	74%	73%	88% +
43-FL is necessary for fellowship				54%	71% +
45-Taking FL for the quality of instruction					71% +
30-Americans think it important to speak FL					67% +
39-FL will be helpful professionally					63% +
12-Would speak language to person					61% +
29-People good in math/science not in FL		56%			56%
28-Easier to read/write FL than to speak/understand					53% +
41-Interested in pol/econ systems of country		58%	62%	65%	-
22-Women better FL learners than men		54%		52%	-
24-Easier to speak than understand			51%	56%	-
44-Friends and relatives speak FL				54%	-
26-FL is translating from English				65%	-
5-FL structured in same way as English			64%		

\+ = increase in percent previous years compared to Yr. 5
\- = decrease in percent previous years compared to Yr. 5

Responses from Students of German

The majority of students of German over time showed agreement for three statements and disagreement for one statement (Table 2).

Agreement. Of the three statements (1, 3, 17) of agreement reported for all years, responses for two statements (3) "Some languages are easier to learn than others" and (1) It is easier for children than adults to learn a FL" showed an increase in agreement from the first to the four year.

Although students did not report agreement in all consecutive years, they indicated an increase in agreement for responses of the first to those of the fourth year for five statements: (46) "I plan to travel to the FL country," (34) "Everyone can learn to speak a FL," (31) "I would like to learn this language so that I can get to know its speakers better," (32) "People who speak more than one language well are very intelligent," and (14) "It takes 3-5 years to learn this FL."

Responses for several statements declined in strength of agreement over the years of instruction: (10) "It is easier for someone who already speaks a FL to learn another" and (45) "The quality of instruction of this language is excellent." In the case of the last statement, these data may reflect the fact that there is only one teacher of German at each high school.

Disagreement. On the other hand, students of German showed an increased response for disagreement over time concerning one statement (9) "You shouldn't say anything in the FL until you can

say it correctly." Initially, students disagreed with the statement (5) "The language I am trying to learn is structured in the same way as English." Fourth-year students disagreed with statements (26) "Learning a FL is mostly a matter of translating from English" and (22) "Women are better than men at FL learning." As evident with students of French, these students also indicated a change in response for (24) from agreement in years 2 and 3 to disagreement in year 4.

Table 2 Response Percentages > 50% for Students of German in 1997/8

Language Sample size	Yr 1 n=8	Yr 2 n=11	Yr 3 n=8	Yr 4 n=4	Yr 5 n=1
		AGREEMENT			
17-Important to repeat & practice	88%	90%	100%	75%	-
3-Some FLs easier to learn than others	75%	70%	88%	100%	+
1-Child learn FL better than adults	75%	73%	63%	100%	+
	***				
46-Plan to travel to FL country	57%	60%		75%	+
31-Learn FL to know its speakers better				75%	+
32-People who speak FLs are intelligent				75%	+
14-It takes 3-5 years to learn this FL				75%	+
34-Everyone can learn to speak FL		70%	75%	67%	+
10-It is easier to learn L3 if learned FL	63%				-
45-Taking FL for the quality of instruction	57%				-
7-Speak with excellent accent			75%		
8-Know foreign culture to speak FL			75%		
12-Would speak language to person			63%		
44-Friends and relatives speak FL			63%		
25-Learning FL differs from other subjects		63%	63%		
11-Better to learn FL in country		60%	63%		
23-Speaking well will bring opportunities		60%	63%		
24-Easier to speak than understand		60%	63%		
38-Distant ancestors who spoke this language		70%			
16-Learning FL is learning vocabulary		70%			
2-Some people born special ability FL		64%			
4-This FL is of medium difficulty		64%			
20-Learning FL is learning grammar		60%			
40-Interested in FL culture of people		60%			
47-Most important proficiency goal (formal)		60%			
21-Practice in Lang. Lab necessary		56%			

Language Sample size	Yr 1 n=8	Yr 2 n=11	Yr 3 n=8	Yr 4 n=4	Yr 5 n=1
	DISAGREEMENT				
9-Do not speak until correct	63%	55%	88%	75%	+
	***				
22-Women better FL learners than men				100%	+
26-FL is translating from English				100%	+
24-Easier to speak than understand				67%	+
5-FL structured in same way as English	88%				-
35-To read in FL, must know all words	63%		75%		
29-People good in math/science not in FL		60%			
36-To listen in FL, must know all words			75%		

\+ = increase in percent previous years compared to Yr. 4
\- = decrease in percent previous years compared to Yr. 4

Responses from Students of Latin

As a result of a small sample size for each year, the number of majority-response statements was great. Students of Latin for the three years analyzed responded with majority agreement for six statements and majority disagreement for six statements (Table 3).

Agreement. Similar to the case for students of French and of German, students of Latin also showed strong, consistent agreement with two statements: (1) "It is easier for children than adults to learn a FL" and (17) "It is important to repeat and practice." In addition, students of Latin also reported agreement with four other statements. Even though Latin is a "dead" language and not typically spoken, these students indicated that in general (34) "Everyone can learn to speak a FL." To be expected, their (47) "Most important proficiency goal" was reading and writing. Likewise, these students were (40) "Interested in the culture of the people who 'spoke' this language." All the respondents indicated that (2) "Some people are born with a special ability which helps them learn a FL." Unfortunately, this response is counter to acquisition theory.

Additional statements may illustrate the uniqueness of studying a non-spoken language. For instance, students showed declining agreement for statement (39) "It (Latin) will be helpful to me professionally." Likewise, students reported an increase in agreement such as statement (42) "I need to fulfill a FL requirement for graduation."

Disagreement. These students like those of French and of German also disagreed with statement (9) "You shouldn't say anything in the FL until you can say it correctly." The other five statements with majority disagreement for all levels showed an increase of disagreement over time: (5) "(Latin) is structured in the same way as English," (22) "Women are better than men at learning FL," (35) "In order to read something in a FL, you have to know all the words," (36) "In order to listen to something in a FL, you have to know all the words," and (38) I have distant ancestors who spoke this language." These responses suggest some linguistic and cultural sensitivity on the part of the students.

Three statements received majority responses from students for agreement and disagreement. At the first-year level, students reported disagreement for (8) "It is necessary to know the culture in order to speak the language," (13) "It's OK to guess if you don't know a word in the FL," (44) "I have friends or relatives who speak (Latin)." After students focus on grammar in the first year, they begin to read texts in the following years. At the upper levels, culture become important and guessing words from context is a common reading strategy.

However, in contrast to first-year students, only fourth-year students of Latin indicated strong disagreement for statement (24) "It is easier to speak than to understand a FL" while first-year students showed agreement. Although students of French and of German showed a similar pattern of response, the intent of their response may reflect the communicative competence

instruction. Because speaking may not be viewed as an important skill, students of Latin may find this skill more difficult than listening.

Table 3 Response Percentages > 50% for Students of Latin in 1997/8

Language Sample size	Yr 1 n=9	Yr 2 n=6	Yr 3 n=1	Yr 4 n=3	Yr 5 n=0	
		AGREEMENT				
17-Important to repeat & practice	100%	83%		100%		
1-Child learn FL better than adults	78%	83%		100%		+
34-Everyone can learn to speak FL	67%	83%		100%		+
47-Most important goal (read/write)	67%	100%		67%		
40-Interested in FL culture of people	63%	67%		100%		+
2-Some people born special ability FL	56%	100%		67%		+
	***					
42-FL is requirement for graduation		83%		100%		+
8-Know foreign culture to speak FL		83%		100%		+
10-It is easier to learn L3 if learned FL				100%		+
39-FL will be helpful professionally				67%		+
18-Feel self-conscious speaking FL				67%		+
13-Guessing is OK				67%		+
4-This FL is of medium difficulty				67%		+
44-Friends and relatives speak FL				67%		+
15-I have a foreign language aptitude				67%		+
25-Learning FL differs from other subjects	100%			67%		-
6-I will learn FL very well	78%			67%		-
39-FL will be helpful professionally	75%	67%				-
28-Easier to read/write FL than to speak/under.		67%		67%		
24-Easier to speak than understand	67%					-
3-Some FLs easier to learn than others	89%	100%				
46-Plan to travel to country where FL spoken		83%				
11-Better to learn FL in country		67%				
41-Interested in pol/econ systems of country		67%				

Language Sample size	Yr 1 n=9	Yr 2 n=6	Yr 3 n=1	Yr 4 n=3	Yr 5 n=0	
		DISAGREEMENT				
35-To read in FL, must know all words	88%	100%		100%		+
22-Women better FL learners than men	78%	67%		100%		+
9-Do not speak until correct	77%	83%		100%		+
36-To listen in FL, must know all words	67%	100%		100%		+
38-Distant ancestors who spoke this language	56%	83%		100%		+
5-FL structured in same way as English	56%	67%		67%		+
	***					
29-People good in math/science not in FL	78%			100%		+
19-Mistakes are hard to rid later	56%			100%		+
26-FL is translating from English	56%			100%		+
24-Easier to speak than understand				100%		+
20-Learning FL is learning grammar rules				100%		+
43-FL is necessary for fellowship	56%			67%		
16-Learning FL is learning vocabulary	56%			67%		
44-Friends and relatives speak FL	56%	100%				
8-Know foreign culture to speak FL	67%					
13-Guessing is OK	67%					
27-Speaking FL well, it will help get job	67%					
42-FL is requirement for graduation	56%					

+ = increase in percent previous years compared to Yr. 4
- = decrease in percent previous years compared to Yr. 4

Responses from Students of Spanish

For the five-year sequence, students of Spanish responded with majority agreement for four statements and majority disagreement for one statements (Table 4).

Agreement. Like the results from students of French and German, the students of Spanish also agreed with statements (1), (3), and (17). In addition, like students of Latin, these students agreed with statement (2) "Some people are born with a special ability which helps them learn a FL." In terms of this latter statement, students in their fifth year may have agreed strongly with this statement as a result of their tenacity to stay in the Spanish program rather than from a "special" language ability or genetics.

Responses for other statements also showed change in agreement over time. Six statements which received 100% agreement in the fifth year displayed substantial changes in response: (46) "I plan to travel to a country where this FL is spoken," (6) "I believe that I will ultimately learn to speak this FL very well," (11) "It is better to learn a FL in the country," (23) "If I get to speak this language very well, I will have many opportunities to use it," (39) "This FL will be helpful to me professionally," and (8) "It is necessary to know the foreign culture in order to speak the FL." These responses indicate strong student motivation and expectation for employment which utilizes Spanish proficiency.

Responses for other statements also showed change in agreement over time. For instance, the responses for statements (4) "This FL is of medium difficulty" and (25) "Learning a FL is different from learning other school subjects" showed a gradual increase in agreement. Initially, for the latter statement, classes may be conducted in a lecture/lesson format. However, in later years, students may become uncomfortable with communicative activities which focus on collective student assignments rather than individual ones. These assignments might include oral reports, group activities, and demonstrations that require increased amounts of target-language talk. Often, Spanish nationals teach upper-level courses and intentionally teach in a Hispanic approach as part of the cultural component of the course. In that case, the class discourse might be less didactic and more collaborative than what students expect of a U.S.-born and educated instructor.

Disagreement. Only statement (38) "I have distant ancestors who spoke this language" received majority disagreement responses for each of the five years sampled. Unlike in other urban districts, most of these students are not heritage speakers. Many of these students are studying Spanish to complete a requirement (42) "I need to fulfill a FL requirement for graduation," for employment purposes (27) "If I learn to speak this FL very well, it will help me get a good job," or for interest in people (40) "I am interested in the culture of the people who speak this FL."

A second set of statements receiving increasingly stronger disagreement response was related to language comprehension such as (9) "You shouldn't say anything in the FL until you can say it correctly," (36) "In order to listen to something in a FL, you have to know all the words," (24) "It is easier to speak than to understand," (26) "Learning a FL is mostly a matter of translating from English," and (35) "In order to read something in a FL, you have to know all the words." These responses suggest that students over time are learning strategies such as cultural-appropriate gestures, circumlocution or synonyms for communicating (i.e., building communicative competency).

Table 4 Response Percentages > 50% for Students of Spanish in 1997/8

Language Sample size	Yr 1 n=53	Yr 2 n=73	Yr 3 n=40	Yr 4 n=15	Yr 5 n=9
		AGREEMENT			
17-Important to repeat & practice	85%	73%	90%	85%	100%+
3-Some FLs easier to learn than others	84%	75%	84%	87%	100%+
1-Child learn FL better than adults	72%	64%	77%	73%	100%+
2-Some people born special ability FL	55%	54%	51%	53%	88% +
	***				
39-FL will be helpful professionally	57%				100%+
46-Plan to travel to country where FL spoken	53%		62%	62%	100%+
6-I will learn FL very well	54%			53%	100%+
11-Better to learn FL in country			56%	67%	100%+
23-Speaking well will bring opportunities				54%	100%+
8-Know foreign culture to speak FL					100%+
4-This FL is of medium difficulty		57%		60%	90% +
40-Interested in FL culture of people					88% +
25-Learning FL differs from other subjects		62%	56%	77%	86% +
16-Learning FL is learning vocabulary	55%				78% +
31-Learn FL to know its speakers better					75% +
27-If speak FL well, it will help get good job					75% +
45-Taking FL for the quality of instruction					75% +
10-It is easier to learn L3 if learned FL					67% +
15-I have a foreign language aptitude					67% +
34-Everyone can learn to speak FL	54%		61%	54%	63% +
42-FL is requirement for graduation			56%	62%	63% +
14-It takes 3-5 years to learn this FL			57%		63% +
32-People who speak many FL are intelligent					63% +
12-Would speak language to person					57% +
13-Guessing is OK				53%	56%
37-Easier to read/understand than speak/write				54%	
19-Mistakes are hard to rid later	52%				
24-Easier to speak than understand		55%			

Language Sample size	Yr 1 n=53	Yr 2 n=73	Yr 3 n=40	Yr 4 n=15	Yr 5 n=9
		DISAGREEMENT			
38-Distant ancestors who spoke this language	54%	52%	53%	62%	100%+
	***				
9-Do not speak until correct	71%		63%	73%	100%
35-To read in FL, must know all words				62%	100%
36-To listen in FL, must know all words			56%	69%	100%
29-People good in math/science not in FL				62%	88%
24-Easier to speak than understand				67%	75%
26-FL is translating from English					75%
28-Easier to read/write FL than to speak/understand				54%	63%
43-FL is necessary for fellowship				54%	63%
33-Americans are good at learning FLs					63%
5-FL structured in same way as English					56%
41-Interested in pol/econ systems of country		52%			
8-Know foreign culture to speak FL	52%				

+ = increase in percent previous years compared to Yr. 5
- = decrease in percent previous years compared to Yr. 5

The composite results of responses from all students (Table 5) showed agreement that (1) "A child learns a FL better than an adult" and (17) "It is important to repeat and practice." The students responded consistently with those from other samples (Fox, Horwitz, Kern, Kuntz, Mantle-Bromley, Trumposky). The strong agreement for the statement (1) suggests a need to provide language instruction in the elementary school as is other countries. At a young age, children can acquire a good pronunciation by their eagerness to repeat sounds and phrase. However, research shows that adults actually learn syntactitic and morphological structures faster than children (Krashen et al.).

The responses to state (17) underscores the need for teachers to provide a variety of repetitions and applications of language functions. The students may recognize that they have different learning styles (Oxford 1990) and multiple intelligences (Gardner) that teachers may want to consider. The repetition of a word, structure, or concept in one particular format may not be sufficient for mainstream students.

Other statements showed a variation in responses by language. For instance, in contrast to students of French, German, and Latin, students of Spanish, did not strongly disagree with statement (9) "You shouldn't say anything in the FL until you can say it correctly." Perhaps, students of second-year Spanish believe that correct pronunciation is important. After

one year of instruction, these students may be focusing on pronunciation.

Likewise, responses to statement (38) "I have a distant ancestor who spoke this FL" showed variation. A majority of students of French and of Spanish disagreed with this statement. Only second-year students of German reported agreement. [Wisconsin is known for its German heritage and long-term German program (Curti & Carstensen).] This result suggests that few students are heritage speakers (recent immigrants) as one might find in large urban districts such as Milwaukee.

Table 5 Statement Percentages > 50% for All Languages (CTLs) in 1997/8

Language Sample size	Total N=447	Fre. N=199	Ger. N=32	Lat. N=19	Span. N=197
	AGREEMENT				
17-Important to repeat & practice	85%	89%	90%	95%	80%
3-Some FLs easier to learn than others	85%	90%	81%	84%	81%
1-Child learn FL better than adults	76%	82%	75%	84%	71%
34-Everyone can learn to speak FL	62%	70%	63%	79%	52%
25-Learning FL differs from other subjects	59%	57%	55%	79%	59%
	***				
2-Some people are born with a FL ability	54%	54%	56%		55%
46-Plan to travel to FL country	54%	64%	59%		
11-Better to learn FL in country	52%		55%	56%	
42-FL is requirement for graduation	54%	62%			
47-Most important goal (reading & writing)				78%	
40-Interested in FL culture of people				72%	
39-FL will be helpful professionally				72%	
13-Guessing is OK				56%	
23-Speaking well will bring opportunities			55%		
8-Know foreign culture to speak FL				53%	
4-This FL is of medium difficulty		53%			
16-Learning FL is learning vocabulary			52%		
6-I will learn FL very well		52%			

Language Sample size	Total N=447	Fre. N=199	Ger. N=32	Lat. N=19	Span. N=197
	DISAGREEMENT				
9-Do not speak until correct	65%	69%	69%	84%	60%
	***				
35-To read in FL, must know all words	56%	64%	52%	83%	
36-To listen in FL, must know all words	55%	63%		63%	
38-Distant ancestors spoke this language	56%	60%			55%
22-Women better FL learners than men				74%	
28-Easier to read/write than to speak/understand				72%	
29-People good in math/science not in FL				63%	
44-Friends and relatives speak FL				63%	
26-FL is translating from English				63%	
16-Learning FL is learning vocabulary				58%	
19-Mistakes are hard to rid later				56%	
41-Interested in pol/econ systems of country		55%			
27-Speaking this FL will help get job				53%	

2. WHAT ARE THE SIGNIFICANTLY DIFFERENT STATEMENT RESPONSES FOR STUDENTS OF FIRST THROUGH FIFTH YEAR OF INSTRUCTION?

To answer this question, the author selected responses from students of French and of Spanish. The sample size for German and Latin were not sufficient to conduct a comparative study.

An ANOVA showed that significant differences occurred for 14 statements from the KRI (Table 6). For all respondents, ten statements showed significantly different responses between the first and the fifth year students. Results from students of French showed five statements that were significantly different while those for students of Spanish showed six statements.

Only two statements for both sets of students showed significant differences. Statement (1) "It is easier for children than adults to learn a FL" showed common linear significant difference. Perhaps, these adolescents as they mature may prefer a warm, supportive learning environment that they envision takes place in FLES, FLEX, and elementary immersion programs. For many school district administrators and the Wisconsin governor, this belief and current research on language acquisition explains why language programs at the elementary school level are promoted. Nevertheless, this response may reveal the anxiety that these students feel toward the pending undergraduate language requirement.

While statement (11) "It is better to learn a FL in the country" was linearly significant for students of Spanish and quadratically significant for students of French. This finding

may suggest that as students progress in the language program they expect some instruction in country. For example, instructors of French in this district regularly take upper-level students to France.

Variability in this analysis was also noted. Three responses were significantly different only for student of French (7) "It is important to speak a FL with an excellent accent," (9) "You shouldn't say anything in the FL until you can say it correctly," and (36) "To listen to something in a FL, you have to know all the words." The latter two findings portray an increased disapproval for the statements over time. Such responses may reflect the instructional practices of the teacher. In contrast, findings from data only for students of Spanish showed significant differences (linear only). Fifth-year students showed stronger agreement than did first-year students for (8) "It is necessary to know the FL culture in order to speak the FL" and (27) If I learn to speak this language very well, it will help me get a good job;" and they showed stronger disagreement for (24) It is easier to speak than to understand a FL," (33) "Americans are good at learning FLs." On the whole, students of French appear to change their beliefs over time concerning communication strategies. While students of Spanish change their beliefs over time concerning the method of language learning.

When the responses from student of German and of Latin are combined with those of French and of Spanish, the results show

additional statements with significantly different responses over time. As students study the language, their responses increase for agreement concerning these statements: (10) "It is easier for someone who already speaks a FL to learn another one" (14) "It takes 3-5 years to learn this FL," and (46) "I plan to travel to a country where this language is spoken." Over time responses increased for disagreement for statements (26) "Learning a FL is mostly a matter of translating from English" and "(35) "To read something in a FL, you have to know all the words." The findings from all students show the greatest changes in beliefs concerning communication strategies (7), (9), (35), and (36).

These changes may reflect program activities and personal experiences. At most district schools, the target language is the medium of instruction and after the second year students are expected to speak only the target language in class.

Table 6 Significant Differences among First, Second, Third, Fourth, and Fifth Year Students of French and of Spanish

Language	All	French		Spanish	
Sample Size	N=451	N=199		N=197	
	linear	lin.	quad.	lin.	quad.
1-Children learn FL better than do adults	.000	.007	.042	.003	
7-Speak with excellent accent			.002		
8-Know foreign culture to speak FL				.001	
9-Do not speak until correct	.000	.000			
10-Easier to learn L3 if learned FL	.002				
11-Better to learn FL in country	.003		.001	.001	
14-It takes 3-5 years to learn this FL	.001				
24-FL is easier to speak than understand				.007	
26-Learning FL is translating from English	.002				
27-If speak FL well, it will help get job				.005	
33-Americans are good language learners	.009			.006	
35-To read FL, one must know all the words	.002				
36-To listen in FL, one must know all the words	.001	.010			
46-Plan to travel to country where FL spoken	.002				

$p < 0.05$
lin. = linear
quad. = quadratic (within sequence)

Conclusion

These results may be seen as general evidence that beliefs of students of CTLs do change over time. Moreover, some of the changes in beliefs strengthen while others weaken. Furthermore, not all the changes benefit the efficiency and effectiveness of language learning espoused by language learning theories. Most striking is the finding that over time, the belief that children learn languages easier than do adults intensifies. In addition, ten changes in beliefs from the first year to the fifth year for students of French and of Spanish are significantly different.

Both teachers and students must identify, organize, and exploit the positive beliefs and modify or change the negative beliefs held by students about learning a language. Such knowledge may help to determine or modify course content, lesson sequence, teaching methods and materials, and even articulation across levels of instruction. In addition, this knowledge of student beliefs makes it possible for teachers to create a mode of instruction in which students' needs and goals are satisfied. With increasingly greater demand for students advanced-level proficiency, teacher and curriculum coordinators need to be vigilant about student beliefs throughout the secondary school program. CTL acquisition may now be understood in terms of the beliefs that secondary students have about their lessons, their control over the curriculum, and their sense of progress through a four- or five-year program.

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Appendix A

BELIEFS ABOUT LANGUAGE LEARNING
(KRI)

(1) Strongly agree (2) Agree (3) Neutral (4) Disagree (5) Strongly disagree

1. It is easier for children than adults to learn a foreign language.

2. Some people are born with a special ability which helps them learn a foreign language.

3. Some languages are easier to learn than others.

4. The language I am trying to learn is:
Very Diff Difficult Medium Diff Easy Very Easy

5. The language I am trying to learn is structured in the same way as English.

6. I believe that I will ultimately learn to speak this language very well.

7. It is important to speak a foreign language with an excellent accent.

8. It is necessary to know the foreign culture in order to speak the foreign language.

9. You should not say anything in the foreign language until you can say it correctly.

10. It is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn another one.

11. It is better to learn a foreign language in the foreign country.

12. If I heard someone speaking the language I am trying to learn, I would go up to them so that I could practice speaking the language.

13. It is okay to guess if you do not know a word in the foreign language.

14. If someone spent one hour a day learning a language, how long would it take him/her to become fluent?
< yr 1-2 yrs 3-5 yrs 5-10 yrs Not possible

15. I have a foreign language aptitude.

16. Learning a foreign language mostly a matter of learning many new vocabulary words.

17. It is important to repeat and practice often.

18. I feel self-conscious speaking the foreign language in front of other people.

19. If you are allowed to make mistakes in the beginning, it will be hard to get rid of them later on.

20. Learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of learning a many of grammar rules.

21. It is important to practice in the language laboratory.

22. Women are better than men at learning foreign languages.

23. If I speak this language very well, I will have many opportunities to use it.

24. If is easier to speak than understand a foreign language.

25. Learning a foreign language is different from learning other school subjects.

26. Learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of translating from English.

27. If I learn to speak this language very well it will help me get a good job.

28. It is easier to read and write this language than to speak and understand it.

29. People who are good at math and science are not good at learning foreign languages.

30. Americans think that it is important to speak a foreign language.

31. I would like to learn this language so that I can get to know its speakers better.

32. People who speak more than one language well are very intelligent.

33. Americans are good at learning foreign languages.

34. Everyone can learn to speak a foreign language.

35. In order to read something in a foreign language, you have to know all the words.

36. In order to listen to something in a foreign language, you have to know all the words.

37. It is easier to read and understand (listen) in this language than it is to speak and write in it.

I am interested in studying this language....

38. because I have distant ancestors who spoke this language.

39. because it will be helpful to me professionally.

40. because I am interested in the culture of the people(s) who speak this language.

41. because I am interested in the politics and/or economics of the country (countries) where this language is spoken.

42. because I need to fulfill a foreign language requirement for graduation.

43. to qualify for a fellowship or some kind of funding for my education.

44. because I have friends or relatives who speak it.

45. because the quality of instruction in this language is excellent.

46. because I plan to travel to a country where this language is spoken.

47. My most important goal in studying this language is to develop the ability to:

read/write easy formal superior native

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